

**DATE 09/10/12**

**SUBJECT**

**Senate Inquiry Into The Importation Of Fijian Ginger.**

**From Barry Gill,**

**To The Chair,  
Senate Inquiry into the Importation of Fijian Ginger**

Dear Sir,

I commenced growing ginger in the Mary Valley some 12 years ago. In that time I have grown my business from very modest beginnings to a large ginger growing operation. An operation that provides work for any person seeking a job in this area and beyond. I have invested heavily in the development of my property and my operational costs make a substantial contribution to the local economy.

As a commercial Ginger grower in the Imbil area of the Mary Valley, I express my grave concerns as to the importation of Fijian ginger. I genuinely fear that the importation of Fijian ginger will put the Australian ginger industry at risk from the introduction of exotic Fijian ginger disease such as Yam Scale and Rodopholus Similis. The Australian Ginger Industry Association has raised a number of concerns regarding the adequacy of pest risk management controls proposed to prevent the threat of imported disease. I share their view that this risk is far too great for an industry, that is far too valuable to southeast Queensland to entertain such an irresponsible action.

Should The Senate Inquiry support the importation of Fijian ginger I would request the following. I understand that methyl bromide fumigation is an option in that it has been successfully used to control internal pest infestation in root products. I ask the Inquiry to satisfy themselves that the treatment with methyl bromide of ginger risezomes is a 100% effective treatment to prevent the entry of disease. I further question the Inquiry as to who will pay compensation to the ginger farmers of southeast Queensland and indeed

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Australia should Fijian ginger disease be introduced through importation? Surely all governments have learnt by now that the best way to control foreign diseases is not let them in, in the first place. If you recommended, that the individuals importing Fijian ginger and those profiting by it be held financially responsible for the consequences of their action in relation to the introduction of disease, I am sure that the enthusiasm with which cavalier decision makers present their case will abate if not disappear. As a farmer I am sick of farmers having to live with the cost consequences of poor decisions made in relation to imports into this country .

I would like to know who initiated the concept of the importation of ginger from Fiji. I suspect that the supermarket chains are again setting about destroying another primary industry in Australia.

I'm also concerned that should the current Federal government after denouncing publicly and most emphatically the coup in Fiji that brought down a democratically elected government, now support the importation of ginger, it would be knowingly and willingly prepared to aid and abet this regime. By doing so the Australian government would show a greater contempt, lack of respect and disregard for its own citizens, myself in particular and the ginger growers of Australia in general than it does for an illegal, immoral, dictatorial, contemptible military lead coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of Fiji.

I also point out to the Inquiry that the ginger industry in the Mary Valley is one of the few industries that offers an agricultural opportunity on which to rebuild a primary industry totally devastated by the Traviston Dam fiasco. A fiasco that has gutted the community more effectively than bushfires or floods. It is not even eligible for disaster funding. Anything that may reduce the primary industries capacity to re-establish and flourish in the Mary Valley should be discouraged.

I remain,  
Yours faithfully,